

Your Honor,

Robert Merkle is a prior and persistent offender. I know this, not because he has cyberstalked and harassed other women over many years. I know this, because he cyberstalked and harassed me over several months in 2017. And then, to my horror, he cyberstalked and harassed my sister in 2021, while he was on probation (for cyberstalking and harassing other women).

Merkle briefly worked as a contractor at the same company as me, Fusion Marketing in St Louis, MO. I received several harassing emails and text messages from him after he was let go from Fusion. By then other women had spoken publicly about threats he'd made towards them of violence and rape on dating websites. I was scared and initially unsure what to do. I felt isolated at work and paralyzed by what little I could do to stop Merkle from contacting me.

The last message I received from Merkle in 2017, I remember quite clearly because it was late in the evening, and I was so frightened I called my family and I left my apartment so I could go stay with them. I went straight to the police the next morning to file a report.

I also remember very clearly the first messages my sister received in 2021. Merkle claimed to be someone else who knew me and was 'looking for' me. I changed my plans for that day immediately so that I could travel to help her file a police report and also, so I would personally feel safer.

There has been a significant emotional and financial toll on my family due to Merkle.

I hired a lawyer, started paying for an online data privacy service for multiple family members, and paid for self-defense classes. I have had to explain my situation to multiple landlords, and felt the need to pay the additional cost to break a lease.

It has been a very frightening experience and has changed the course of my life. I have moved multiple times, and moved in with my family at times to feel safer. I have changed jobs and had to explain my situation to multiple managers. I have become wary of telling anyone I work with any other details of my personal life. I have left St. Louis, despite it being my home for many years, because that seems to be the area he physically stays around and physical distance helps me feel slightly less worried that Merkle will physically stalk me.

When he was out of prison, even being in a different city, I would still look over my shoulder at the grocery store or when walking in my neighborhood. I still feel like my heart jumps every time I get a call, text message or email from an unknown sender, even knowing that it is most likely spam and that Merkle is currently in jail, facing charges for harassing other women.

I would like to recommend to the Court that he receive the maximum sentence under the law for each charge. I would also like to recommend that any sentence(s) be served in full, and not concurrently. Merkle worked as a software engineer and he made prolific usage of phone and email spoofing services in order to stalk and harass women, including myself. For that reason, I would recommend to the Court that he not receive access to the internet or a computer while serving his sentence(s).

Thank you,

A [REDACTED] B [REDACTED]